

The *Cheenikum Sukalailai* Troupe
LA Diabetes Community Theater Collective(Labasa)
Presents

PERFORMANCE TWO: HEALING FAITH

Characters

1. Narrator	(N)	Save
2. Fixer/Vendor	(F)	Miriam
3. Diabetic Patient -Disabled Diabetic	(DP)	Dilewa
4. Witch Doctor/Faith Healer/Naturopath	(WD)	Militoni
5. Staff Nurse	(SN)	Asha

Understudy: Peni Drauna (1/3)

Vuli (2/4)

Amelia (1/5)

Crew

Lights/production: Vuli Takayawa

Script: Mohit Prasad

Director: Mohit Prasad

Production Associate: Kaushal Sharma

Producer: Philip Szmedra

Production Partners

Georgia State University The University of the South Pacific

USP Labasa Campus Ministry of Health (Fiji) – Labasa Hospital

Synopsis: Play on context for faith healing and traditional medicine with the Fixer/Vendor as a central character in promoting the healing qualities of the witch doctor/faith healer/naturopath. Play looks at the role of faith in medicine and appropriate usage of natural medicines. It exposes the false claims of a cure for diabetes through these means and depicts how it becomes a barrier to clinical intervention for diabetes. The play traces the conflicts between these “cures” and clinical options as the diabetic patient through dependence on the traditional forms ends up with an amputated limb.

(Opening Fixer on mobile phone ad-libs responses to clients, seated on a bench. She is dressed neatly, carries a briefcase, and makes notes in a pocket diary. Narrator dressed in a formal I-Taukei attire pauses behind F, shakes his head, and walks CS)

Narrator: Ni Sa Bula! Namaste! Salam Wale Kum! Good Morning. (*Greetings in main languages/sectarian normative in Fiji*) A warm welcome to the Diabetes Hub at the Labasa Hospital. This morning we will perform a drama...ek chota natak...na vakatasosua lailai. ... (*A small play*) About how and why you need doctors and medicine to control your diabetes.

(Looks at Fixer (F) and walks BS behind her. Points to F, who is oblivious on the phone to N)

And why you should not depend on people like her.

(N moves offstage)

Fixer (On phone): Are Bhैया...(*Look brother!*) I am telling you I fix everything! \LTA aur (*and*) passport, na (*the*) visa, overseas marriage I find one old budha gora (*old white man*) for you. Oh! Sa! (*What*) You already –che ladkan, (*six kids!*), are never mind – okay what you want!

(Listens intently and ponders over conversation, before brightening up)

Acha! Sa Dina...you feeling sick...losing weight...going to pee all the time...want to eat sweets.....are jalebi khali mango khao! (*Eat Indian sweet meats*)

(Pauses and listens some more, static on phone...recording????)

Sobo...Sa Leqa...O So....Io Eh! (*Oh No...that is bad news, eh!*) Acha...this is a serious case...can't even do that...so no more children...sa leqa eh bosso... (*Bad news, eh boss*) no no..no....I can fix this.

(Listens and then pauses, then thinks hard. Eureka moment with finger pointed up!) Boss...Hum Jaano....Konchi Bhae...koi jadu karo...no..no...yes..yes...must be...hah....this one case of draunikau....strong one...bada jadooo...I know.....can you meet me.

(Boss...I know, what happened, someone has done witchcraft on you...a strong case of traditional Fijian witchcraft...very strong stuff.)

(Pauses....flips through diary and checks phone...)

....Mon(day)...No...No make it Tuesday...Monday I fix one PSC license for my Tau from Naleba....my office...no...no...we meet at the Labasa Hospital Car Park...you know near the diabetes hub...you know the bench in the corridor...where the diabetes patients come...okay see you there...(F looks around and goes back to messaging on the phone)

Narrator (enters LS) pauses and flips over butcher paper sign painted "TUESDAY" . N clicks fingers and WD and F become 'statue' and are left in mid-action, as they peer straight at the crowd.

Our ancestors believed in traditional medicine, faith healing and sometimes witch doctors – the ojha (*witchdoctor*) and those who practice draunikau. (*Witchcraft*)

Belief, biswas ... in these things is important to each one of us.

(Pauses - Produces a poster on how one becomes diabetic. Points out scientific data)

This poster tells us how and why diabetes is formed in our bodies. It also tells us that once you become diabetic you cannot be cured. Diabetes care is about control. And for those who do not have diabetes, it is about prevention. No one can cure you. Doctors or witchdoctors.

But, the doctors, nurses and regular check-ups at the diabetes hub can control diabetes and let you lead a normal life.

Put your faith in the clinic and the doctors and nurses to help you live a normal life.

Do not believe in false prophets who are only interested in your money. See how this one sets up his appointments like a shop owner. They are misusing the old ways, our faith and belief to con you.

(N walks BS to bench and ponders over F who re-enters play in conversation on phone that she slowly “tunes out” by lowering her voice but continues to make gestures – facial/physical – to give a sense of her in conversation with a client about fixing something)

N: Look at this one (F pauses in conversation and smiles sly at audience and makes an exaggerated gesture of self-introduction by sweeping her hands in front and taking a low bow. N, shakes head in exasperation) This one...she thinks she can fix everything. Let us see if she can fix things for her next client.

N clicks fingers and WD and F become animated once more.)

F: (Waves into distance) Bula Boss...Kaise Hai...Sab Theek....Nai Worry Karta....Main Hoon Na (Filmic tone) *(Hello boss....how are you? All Good. Don't worry...I am here.)*

(N exits, Diabetic Patient (DP) walks in, dressed in crumpled clothes and looking agitated. He carries a walking stick, a pack of cigarettes and in his back pocket a half bottle of rum, that he produces and places it between him and F)

DP: Sa Lega...(Oh no...not good). Things not good - eh (Pauses...plays with cigarette....ponders over bottle of rum...unscrews and takes a long swig...and

wipes mouth with back of hand...hands shake...as he attempts to light the cigarette....F....looks him over and holds his hands)

F: Okay tamaku (*cigarette 'tobacco'*) later...let us see what we can fix.

DP: (sits dejectedly) Too late...you know it fate...eh....konchi sako kare....sab likhan hai... (*What can we do...the gods and fate write it for us*)

F: Are...Aise Nahi Baat Karo...I am the fixer...I can fix anything....even fate....hey listen...here...tension nahi lene ke....kaise baat! (brightens up and completes film dialogue) tension...dene ka...(laughs and DP joins in reluctantly. F punches numbers on the phone and begins an animated conversation.)

(Don't be pessimistic, I am the fixer....don't get stressed...life is for giving stress to others)

DP: Who you calling?

F: Hello....hello....are kon baat kare...Yogi...konchi...Jogi....nahi hum maango Tambi ojha se baat karo...oh tum hai what's wrong with your voice – too much grog last night!. (Pausesacha... (*okay*) appointment...what you think you one medical doctor....

(Hello...who is this....Yogi...Jogi...No....I want Tambi the witchdoctor)

DP: Laiva...leave it...I will be okay...

F: Sh...Sh....Let me handle this....acha acha gusa nahi hum long ow...Eh Kab...

(Okay...take it easy...no need to get angry...we will come...when can we come.)

DP: (Gestures resignedly)Thursday...Morning_

Thursday sabere....acha set....(turns to DP, who stubs out cigarette) okay all set...don't worry ...sab set hai....are bhaiya all is well...c'mon....(DP joins in)...are bhaiya all is well...chalo baini all is well...

(Thursday morning....okay...it is all organized...look bro...all is well...come on brother all is well...-aside to women in the audience...let us go sisters...for all is well.)

(F, DD offstage, and costume change before re-entering)

N: Flips butcher paper sign "Thursday

N: You need faith in the healing powers of god, as you do in the healing powers of medicine, good advice, clinic attendance, good feet, eye and limb care...and looking after your weight with proper diet and exercise.

(Points at F and DD who enter from behind N in earnest conversation, with F reassuring DD of the powers of the faith healer.)

You should not be fooled by false prophets with mobile phone and sweet words

F (On Mobile ph) Yes...we waiting here...O sobo....*(Oh No)* oh no not there...turn around...see you can see us (waves offstage and gestures for WD to join them.

F: (turns to DD) Okay you brought the cash and sevusevu. *(Traditional indigenous Fijian gift usually given as a offering of good faith and for the granting of entry in a traditional space.)*

(Peers into bag that DD produces and expresses satisfaction with a thumbs up) Let me do the talking (Duo make way for WD)

WD: (Walks around stage muttering chants...mumbo jumbo...takes beads and walks around patients intoning his chants)

Sh...silence...sh...I can feel the bad spirit...you....you there..you have bad enemies...bahut kharab....kada jadoo....sa kaukau na draunikau....you will need to have faith in me....do you have faith in me...

(Enemies ...very bad...very strong witchcraft...)

DD: (looks at F who nods in agreement...and motions for DD to assent...) Yes....

WD: Yes...say yes to the Lord of Healing....for I will heal...but you must submit totally...puran vishwas mangta hum...*(total and dedicated belief)* total...belief...

DD: Yes...my lord...

FH: Praise the Healer..Praise his Powers...Uske Shakti...Ke Khoobhi Dekho....Let us watch his powers!

WD: Come my son...let me start the healing...(walks around and smears ash and turmeric on DD's head..)

DD: I am feeling weak...faint...my mouth is dry...my heart beat is fast and faster...janae humar time ai gais hai...*(Looks like my time has come to meet my maker)*

FH: Have faith....puran vishwas....*(total faith)* praise the great healer

DD: I feel like I am going to faint.

WD (Walks over closer to DD and chants furiously)

DD: (peers at mobile...) hang on...call from Diabetes clinic...oh sobo...forget it is my foot clinic day...yes...Sister Miri...sorry...I am just here...at the park...Sister..I feel faint

WD: Produces a small bottle of milky liquid) Here drink this...DD Looks doubtful...unscrews cap and makes his face at the smell

DD: Sa...sa..leqa.... *(Oh no!)* this one smells like bad milk and tap water...I will get sick....

F; Are....drink up...this fallah hia knows his stuff...see he curedwhat's...his name....are...that famous...rugby player...

DD Still looks around and is doubtful....(hears someone talking on phone (Nurse offstage)....what....sa...phone was still on...sorry Sister you were listening...what...kuch nahi hoi... *(Don't worry nothing is happening)* just sitting

here in the shade...are hum suche bolta...kon ojha...nahi...konchi sa... *(C'mon I am telling the truth...what withdoctor...what...oh no!)*

You are already here...been following our talk here...no I will not drink...that stuff...(pushes aside the bottle that F is now trying to make DD drink.)

Enter Staff Nurse (SN): Konchi Hoi Hai Yeha. Tum..Phir Se Koi ki Pagla Banata. You never learn do you? *(What is happening here...fooling someone again!)*

DD (Splutters and coughs) Sorry sister, this one here, (points at F) made me do it.

SN: What you think...you are one little kid....someone says jump and you jump...you already know how important it is to control your diabetes and we have already spend so much time, effort and money to tell you the facts about the disease and how you can only control it, and that it cannot be cured. Sa dina...kaise dimaag me nahin aye ee baat....

F: Sister...thank you for coming...we all know the ways of the world is mysterious...who knows how faith and natural medicine can bring...about miracle....biswas ke chamatkaar.... *(the miracle of faith)* the miracle of the one above...praise the lord.

SN: There is nothing wrong with faith, natural medicine and even miracles. And the lord and the one above is always there for those who believe. And I do believe. Praise the lord...prabhu ki jai ho! *(Praise the lord!)*

WD: Sister...I am just the messenger...a poor prophet sent to look after the poor and the needy.

SN: You are nothing more than a false prophet...sa...ee sab jane ke kaun kaun town se tum bhaga hai...*(C'mon everyone knows how you run from town to town)* and all the police complaints against you and your false medicine.

F: I am sure there is some mistake...must be....this person is highly recommended...see he even has references and photos with famous people.....

SN: Let me look at that...(peers at a reference and a photograph) Are...dekho kaise Boss yeha Obama ke saate khada hai...*(Oh look how he stands next to Obama in*

this picture) making false claims eh...look at this photo...you make this on a computer...and these references....wait...wait...I call...whose these...the PM.....

WD: (Cringers in background) Are....sister...why want to play police...those photos are old...and you know PM busy man.....you sait bhulai jao...hume....lekin ek time hum log ekdum aise (mimes with fingers being close) *(He [Pm] might have forgotten me...but once upon a time we were very close)*

SN: Stop making these poor people's lives even worse...there is nothing worse than those who profit from the misfortunes of others...especially the sick...who need proper care....medical care to control diabetes...with proper diet, exercise and medical care.

F: What is wrong with trying, sister? After all this is service to people.

SN: And money for yourself?

DD: We do not make money...only small charge to cover costs...all this is a gift from god. By the way...tum kon hai... *(Who are you!)* who are you.... to stop me giving that gift to the people. Bhagwan ke den...hum sabse badta. *(This is a gift from god that I distribute to all)*

SN: Power to you and to profit for me, eh!

F: Stop making us sound bad...this man...came to us when you failed to cure him....uske paas koi rasta nahi raha. *(he did not have any other way)*

SN: First of all and for the last time...acha se soono...*(listen to me carefully)* diabetes cannot be cured...it can only be controlled.

DD: Sa sister...don't get angry...are ee khali maango madat karo....*(Oh sister...let it be, after all he only wants to help)*

F: Ha....service to mankind....insaaniyat. *(humanity)*

SN: Oh...Insaniyaat...jeb me bharo paisa aur baat karo insaniyat ke...

(Oh...humanity...you con all these people and pocket the money and call that humanity)

WD: Oo Khali Malik jaano...Only the lord know....praise the lord....Shantih Shantih...sister...thoda shaantih...

(Only god knows...peace...peace...sister...a lit bit of peace)

SN: Malik jaano...that ...we do not fail our patients...our patients sometimes fail themselves. They fail to change the way they live, eat, drink, and take control over exercise, their weight and diet.

F: (field a call...) Konchi...LTA phir se pakdo...acha....booking ticket number...text kar...(turns) business...thoda karlay....business sister...

(What did the land transport authority catch you again...okay text me your booking number...just let me finish off some business)

SN: (Disgusted and waves away F dismissively) What about you...udar nahi taako....iske mile sakta hai yeha ai ken na!

(Don't ignore me....you can come and meet this quack here and not us.)

Why you not come here at the clinic on Tuesday to get your weight checked and your medication looked at.

DD: I have tried that and it is very hard...I need an instant cure...maago...jaldi theek hoi jao...

(I want to get cured quickly)

SN: Life is not an instant...it takes time and effort to control and try to reverse some of the damage of your bad life choices....bbq...sausages...beer...yaqona and too much kakase...(gossip)

WD: You know I never promise anything without the faith of the patient. You have to believe...really and truly believe...come join me in a prayer....(starts chanting)

SN: You are like a rubber band....keep coming back for more...abhi tak kuch acha nahi seekha...aao tumhaar khoon check kari...aao...doono jan aoo....tab dekhin kaise tumhar instant cure aur puran viswas kaam kare.

(You have not learnt anything so far...let me check your blood...come on both of you...then we can see how your instant cure and total faith works)

WD: (Turns to Fixer) Eh...Bro...You first...hum toh fit hai...check karo iske...raide mada...Nasi...

(I am okay...check this one...look at him nurse)

F: Kua...Nahi...Hum daaro...sa lega sarau needle aur khun se...

(Don't...No.....I am scared....both of the needle and blood)

SN: Are...why you lamu (*scared*)...Aao...Mai.. (*Come here*) Show us your faith...put your trust in fate...let us see what your blood says about you. Okay who wants to go first....(phone rings...both Fixer and WD scramble for phones....SN holds up her phone that is calling one of them...laughs and gets their attention)..C'mon...I will text your blood results...use my double up points!!!!

WD: (Sheepishly) I am scared...nahi maango jano...(*ignorance is bliss*) better that way...

F: Me too...what I don't know...won't hurt me...

SN: No...that is not true...what you don't know about your health will kill you.

N: See my friends....see how these two show their true colors...they are false prophets...jhoot bol ke sub ke Con kare....diabetes...ke koi nahi sake acha hoi...khali..sake control kare...tub tum sako...acha jindagi jio...

(They con people with lies...diabetes...cannot be cured...you can control it and lead as normal a life a possible)

SN: Yes...clinics and knowing what to eat and what not to eat...and when to eat...and how to keep a healthy weight through exercise and diet...is the key...khali aise sako...diabetes ke harao..

(This is the only way to beat diabetes)

WD: (Gets up and walks with a limp and then drinks thirstily from a soft drink bottle...passes to F who pauses and then pours 'rum" into the soft drink...and swigs...)

SN: Enough you two...from my experience I can bet that both of you are already diabetic...and the blood test will only confirm it...and then we can help you....

DP: Yes...they always drinking soft drink and always running to pee...

SN: You both know you cannot help yourself even as you lie that you can help others with your false promises and false cures...the worst lies are the lies you tell yourself....

DP: Thank you sister for taking the time to show me the error of my ways...I will never look for a short cut through ojhas or false prophets...taking short cuts and wrong advice was what led to diabetes in the first place...

N: In the end...all the lies ...the ones you tell yourself and those that others tell you will not lead to a cure for diabetes...it is very simple...you cannot have a cure for a disease that cannot be cured....join me my friends and repeat after me...

(SN and DP clap to the beat of "We Will We Will Rock You" and get the audience to join them)

We will...we will...beat diabetes...

We will...we will...control our diet...

We will....we will...come to the clinic

We will....we will....do the bula 5.30 and exercise...

We will.... we will not be beaten....

We will.... We will beat diabetes

We will.... we will not be beaten....

We will.... We will beat diabetes

(WD and F in in midway....and offer their hands for testing to SN....who take them
aside and takes out a testing kit.....)

Ends.